

For the Rev. D^r Wigglesworth

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Mr. Chauncy's
S E R M O N
On the DEATH of
Mrs. Sarah Byfield.

THE
WOMAN

OF THE FUTURE

*MAN's Life considered under the Simi-
litude of a Vapour, that appeareth for
a little Time, and then vanisheth away.*

A
S E R M O N

on the *Death*
of that

HONORABLE & VERTUOUS
Gentlewoman

Mrs. Sarah Byfield,

The amiable Consort of the Honorable
NATHANAEL BYFIELD, Esq;

Who died *Decemb. 21* ft. 1730.

In the 58th Year of her Age.

By **CHARLES CHAUNCEY, M.A.**

One of the Pastors of the first Church in BOSTON.

1 Chron. xxix. 15. --- *Our days on earth are as
a shadow, and there is none abiding.*

Psal. xxxix. 4. *LORD, make me to know mine end,
and the measure of my days what it is : that I
may know how frail I am.*

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M D C C X X I.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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To the Honourable
Nathanael Byfield Esq;

Honoured S I R,

WHEN I had fallen in with Your Desire to Print this Sermon, I could not prevail with myself to let it go to the Press, without first paying Public regards to so good a Friend: whom, I have Reason to love & reverence as a Father.

The Sermon was Preach'd on the lamented Death of your dear & amiable Consort. I tho't it proper to take special Notice of such a Providence: and as I endeavour'd to improve it for the Benefit of all my Hearers; so for Your's in particular. In the Character I have given Madam Byfield, I have not affected Niceness & Acuracy; yet have had a strict regard to Truth & Uprightness. And I doubt not, but all that were acquainted with her, will judge, that her Memory is worthy to be transmitted to Posterity, with more Honour, than I have been able to do it.

D E D I C A T I O N.

I heartily joyn with You, Sir, in rendring Thanks to a good G O D, who directed you to a Person, every way so agreeable : and that He continued her, so long a Blessing and Comfort to you ; the pleasant Companion of your Age ; your Crown & Ornament. 'Tis the same most Wise & Merciful G O D, that has taken her away from you. And 'tis for your Good, He has thus afflicted you. This Correction of your Heavenly Father, was necessary in that Chain of Events, by which, He had ordained to bring you to Glory : which is the highest Motive to Patience & Submission.

May this, and all other Divine Dispensations be Sanctify'd to You ! and bless'd as a Means to make you still more meet for that World, where there is no Sin nor Sorrow where all Tears shall be wip'd from your Eyes, and you shall be compleatly happy in the Sight and Fruition of the blessed G O D. And may your Children, (already Propagated to the fourth Generation, and) throughout all Generations, follow you into the Heavenly State, and be an Eternal Spring of Joy to You !

So Prays,

Your much oblig'd and

Affectionate Servant in CHRIST,

Charles Chauncy.

Man's *Life* consider'd under

THE

Similitude of a *Vapour*.

JAMES IV. 14. ———

For what is your Life? It is even a Vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

I Have made Choice of this *Text*, to lead you into some proper Meditations on *humane Frailty*: a subject *never* unsuitable for *dying* Men to employ their Tho'ts upon; and *particularly* seasonable, after any fresh, affecting Instance of *Mortality*.

We are here presented with a very instructive Description of *Life*. It's consider'd under the Similitude of a *Vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*. A true and lively Representation of the *State*, of *Man's Life* upon Earth! which is of but short Continuance, inconstant and uncertain: The effect whereof thou'd be, our *living* after the best and wisest manner; to the purposes of another World, & so as to secure to our selves, an *Interest* in that *future & eternal Life*, which the Gospel has reveal'd, and promises *to them, who, by patient*

patient continuance in well doing, seek for Glory, Honour and Immortality.

And that we may be excited and quicken'd, in making such an *Improvement* of the *present Life*, I shall beg your Attention, while I am discoursing to you, upon the two following important Points ; agreeable to the *Scope* of the *Apostle* in the words, I have recd to you.

I. I shall consider the Representation that is here given us of *Man's Life*.

II. I shall shew, What *Influence*, such a Representation, ought, in all reason, to have upon us.

I. I am to consider the Representation, that is here made of *Man's Life*. *It is even a Vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

I have no Design to pursue this *Metaphor*, in all the little Resemblances, which one's Imagination might easily suggest : but shall confine my self to a few Particulars ; which lie open to common View, and were, no doubt, the things intended by the *Apostle*. And they are such as these. 1. That *Man's Life*, upon Earth, is *Short*. 2. *Uncertain*. 3. *Inconstant*. 4. *Irrecoverable*, when once gone.

I. *Man's Life* may be represented by a *Vapour*, to signify the exceeding *Shortness* of it.

A *Vapour* is of but *short* Continuance. It may, for a while, “wander upon the Surface of the Earth or Water;” but is soon driven away by the Wind: or spends it self, and *vanishes away*. Just the same thing may be said of the *Life* of *Man*: which, whatever it is, and however active and buisie it may for a while appear, is yet soon extinguished: or of it self languishes and expires. The *Scriptures* are full of affecting Illustrations to this purpose. They sometimes comprehend *Man's Life*, within the narrow compass of an *Hand-breadth*; which is one of the most inconsiderable Measures. Psal. 39. 5. *Behold, thou hast made my Days as an Hand-breadth*. Sometimes they limit it to the Time a Man takes in *telling a Story*; which soon passes away, and is gone. Psal. 90. 9. *For all our Days are passed away in thy Wrath: We spend our Days as a Tale that is told*. At other times, they measure *Life*, by some of the *Swiftest Motions*; to signify how soon it arrives at it's determin'd Period. Our Days are said to be *swifter* than a *Weaver's Shuttle**, which is no sooner thrown in at one side of the Web, but it is out at the other; to pass away as the *swift Ships*, which with a brisk Gale, are quickly carried out of Sight; to be *swifter* than a *Post*, who hurries along, with all possible Speed. And the *Eagle* that maketh towards *her Prey*, does not *fly*

* Job 7. 6.

more *swiftly*, than the *Life* of *Man* passes away : As these things are elegantly express'd, Job 9. 25, 26. *Now my days are swifter than a Post: they flee away: --- they are passed away as the swift Ships : as the Eagle that hasteth to her prey.*

And there is a certain Justness and Propriety in these *Scripture* Representations of *Man's Life* ; tho' borrow'd from things, some of which are but of few Days, and others of but few Moments Continuance : and that, if at the same Time, we should suppose it to reach the *utmost Bounds* of it's appointed *Duration*. For what are *threescore or fourscore Years* ? As the *Psalmist's* Expression is, * they are soon cut off, and we fly away. Indeed, when we look forward from *Youth* or *Childhood*, to *Old age* ; it appears at a vast Distance : and as tho' we should scarce ever arrive at it. But by only changing the *Scituation* of our selves, how different will the Prospect appear ! Let a Person look back from *Age* to *Youth*, and it will seem but a very small Space : those *Thirty* or *Forty Years*, which were judged by him in his *Childhood* unattainable, how short do they seem, now he has *passed thro' them* ! So true is that Observation, That *a Day to come shews longer to us than a Year that is gone*. And it is the universal Sense of all that are *grown into Years* concerning it. They are even surpriz'd, when

* Psalm 90. 10,

they look back to find, how insensibly their *Days* are rolled away. If they extend their *View* forty, fifty, or threescore Years *backwards*; they can scarce believe they have *Liv'd* so long, it appears such a *Moment* of time. And generally speaking, the longer Persons live, the *shorter* their *past* Days and Years seem to them: And when they are in a serious turn of *Tho't*, they more thoroughly realize, what a *small* part of *Duration*, the *Term* of *Humane Life* contains.

And if the *Life* of *Man* appears thus *short* even to *Men* themselves, when set in a due light: how much more *inconsiderable* must it seem in *GOD's* Eye! with whom there is no *Beginning of Days*, nor *End of Years*; and in whose Sight *a thousand Years* are but as *one Day*. Surely in this *View of Life*, it must sink into the *smallest* Point of Time. Yea, as the *Psalmist* phrases it, *our Age is as nothing before GOD*. † Nay, if our *Lives*, like *Methuselah's*, were protracted to near a *Thousand* Years; in *GOD's* Account, and in compare with his *Eternal* Duration, they would seem but as a single Moment. And yet, how many of our *Ages* go to make up a *Thousand* Years! and yet further, how *few* live to what we call the *full Age* of a *Man*! Perhaps the greatest part of *Mankind* die within the *Space* of the *first Seven Years*. And were one arrives at *where*

the general *Period* affix'd to *Humane Life*, a *thousand* die in *Youth* or *Middle age*. Such a *Justness* and *Propriety* is there in these *Scripture* Representations of *Man's Life*: like a *Vapour*, it appears but for a little time, and then *vanishes away*.

If any thou'd now feel themselves *uneasie* at this Representation of *Life*, and be tempted to think *hardly* of *GOD*, for making the *Limits* of it so exceeding *narrow*; it will at once satisfy all their *Objections*, to consider *Life* in the true and proper *Notion* of it: as a *Probation season* for *Eternity*.

The *GOD* that gave us our *Beings*, design'd them for an *End* worthy of Himself, and those noble *Powers*, He has endow'd us with. But this *End* is not to be obtain'd in *this World*. There is nothing *here*, that can satisfy the *Desires* of our Souls, or be a commensurate *Happiness* for them. We must look beyond the *Grave* for this, to the unseen unutterable *Glories* of the *Heavenly State*. And if we take a View of the *present Life*, as referring to *this State*, and a *Trial* for our Entrance into it, it will sufficiently justify, both the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of *GOD* in the *Shortness* of it.

Especially, if we go on and consider, that the Time of *Life* is a *space* full long enough for the *Business* we were sent into the World upon; viz. to make *Preparation* for *Eternity*. For thro' the *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, who has obey'd the *Law*, and suffer'd the *Penalty*

of it, for *us* and in *our* stead; the *Terms* of Salvation are bro't down to our present *fallen* State: and nothing more is *absolutely* requir'd of us, but FAITH in JESUS CHRIST, as the SON of the *living* GOD, including in it the *Seeds & Principles* of sincere *Repentance*, and a true *Gospel Obedience*. And no sooner is such a *Faith* wrought in our Souls, but our *main Work* is done, and the *great Design* of *Life* answered. And Persons not only may, but often are, even in the *beginning* of *Life*, thus endow'd with *Faith*. And a *little* Time, if it be well improv'd, in the diligent Use of proper Means, will serve for this purpose. And *all* that is *afterwards* necessary, will be *only* to give proof of our good Estate; to *continue* in the *Faith* of CHRIST, to *grow* in *Grace*; to *shine* in the World by our *good Examples*; and in a word, to *glorify* GOD by our holy *Carriage* of our selves under whatever Condition He shall please to order out unto us. And when our Lives come to be thus employ'd, the *shorter* they are the *better*; inasmuch as we shall hereby the sooner obtain *the End of our Faith, the Salvation of our Souls*. And this is the Tho't of all that are truly wise. They would not willingly have the Term of Life set at a *further* Distance, least the Tryal of their Graces should be *too* heavy and tedious; and the *full* Reward of their Faith and Good works *too* long detain'd from them.

And

And on the other hand, when Persons do pervert the grand Design of Life; neglecting their Souls, and taking no Care to prepare themselves for the future State; 'tis unreasonable to expect their Lives should be protracted, beyond what the Lives of Men ordinarily are, that so they might have a *longer* Space of Tryal, before their Condition is unalterably determin'd. For if they should live over the present Life, as bounded by GOD, tho'tless of Eternity, and unconcern'd to make Preparation for it; and instead hereof, should spend their Days in Vanity, or the Gratification of their Fleishly Lusts, there would be but little Hope of their Amendment and returning to a better Mind, if their Time should be lengthn'd out to the *longest* Period: But on the contrary, great reason to fear, that they would only grow more bold and obstinate in Wickedness, and get still at a further Distance from GOD and Happiness. Besides, the *ordinary* Duration of Man's Life, is full long enough for such Persons to be continued *Plagues* to Mankind, by their evil Practices and bad Examples. And 'tis in *Mercy* to the World in general, that the Time of their Life is limited to *threescore* or *four score* Years.

But I must not enlarge here. To proceed,

II. By the *Metaphor* in the *Text*, we have represented to us, the *utter Uncertainty of Humane Life*. What more *uncertain* than the Appearance of a *Vapour*? It sometimes continues

tinues a *longer*, and sometimes a *shorter* Time : is sometimes *suddenly* extinguished, and sometimes *slowly* and by *degrees*.—Alike *uncertain* is the *Life* of *Man*. 'Tis *certain* indeed, that *all Men shall once die*. And there is no *Man* living but knows that he shall die. We know likewise, that we are surrounded with an infinite Variety of Distempers, and every moment lie expos'd to innumerable Accidents, which may put a Period to our Days. So that there is no *Point* of Time, in which we are free from Danger, and may be sure of not falling by the Stroke of Death. Yet, *the precise Time when, and particular Means and manner how*, remain, as to us, *absolute Uncertainties*. *Man knoweth not his Time* *. This is the *Sole* Prerogative of *the most high G O D*. Nothing, to Him, is either contingent or uncertain. And in a very particular manner, He is the *Supream* LORD of *Life* and *Death*. And as *such*, He hath appointed the *Day* and *Hour*; nay, the very *Moment*, when every *Son* and *Daughter* of *Adam*, shall undergo the Change of Death. *Job* seems to have put this Matter beyond Dispute, *Job 7. 1. Is there not an appointed time to Man upon Earth? Are not his Days also like the Days of an Hireling? An Hireling*, we all know, hath his *fix'd* Time of Service : and when this is expired, he is discharg'd from his Labour. The same thing may be said of

* Eccles. 9. 12.

Man: he has his *determin'd* Time of Duration; and whenever this comes, in a moment he expires. This Matter is further illustrated, Chap. 14. 5. *Man's days are determined, the Number of his Months are with thee: thou hast appointed his Bounds, that he cannot pass.* So that, let our Character be what it will; if we are never so desir'd, or never so useful: or let our State be what it will; be we prepar'd or unprepar'd, we must at such a particular Point of Time, which GOD from Eternity, has pitch'd upon, be dismiss'd from the Body. And He will so order it in his *Active Providence*, that all necessary natural Causes shall *unitedly* concur, to put a Period to our Life, not only at the *very Time*, but after the *same manner*, that he has decreed.

GOD has not indeed allotted to all Men the *same* Number of Months and Years: nor determin'd to accomplish his *Decree* upon them, by the *same* Means and after the *same* manner; but has *variously* fix'd the *Periods* of Life in different Persons, and uses as great a *Variety* in the *Means* and *manner* of their Death. And upon this Account it is, that both the *Time* and *Means & manner* of our going out of the World, are, as to us, Matters of the *greatest Uncertainty*.

We know not *when* we shall die: whether in Infancy or Childhood, while our Natures are weak and tender; before we are instructed in the Worth of Life, or are capable of exerting ourselves

ourselves to any valuable purposes? Or in *Youth*, our Constitutions being strong & healthy; our Powers active and sprightly, and in the best Capacity of serving the Ends of Life? Or whether we shall continue, till *the evil Days come, and the Years draw nigh, when we shall say, we have no Pleasure in them?*

We Know not the *Manner* in which we shall die: Whether on a Sudden, or by slow & leisurly Steps? in the Height of Prosperity, or Depth of Adversity? in a Throng of worldly Business, or free from outward Cares and Incumberances? *Death* will most certainly seize upon us: but where will it be? In the Closet, or the Street? in the Shop, or the Field? at Sea, or on dry Land?—These things are *Secrets* in the Breast of G O D alone ———

In fine, We are absolutely ignorant by what *Means* GOD will take us out of the World: whether by Disease, or Accident? according to Nature, or by Force & Violence? He will doubtless make use of natural Causes: But what will they be? A Fever, or a Frenzy? the Teeth of an Insect, or a blast of Wind? a Morsel of Meat, or a Hair from our Heads? a fall from a Horse, or the hand of Malice? Or will *He* suffer us to live, till Nature is Spent, & we die of ourselves?—

Thus *Uncertain* a thing is the *Life* of Man. ——— And it is an Argument of great Wisdom and Goodness in GOD, that 'tis so. For if we Knew the *determinate* Space of Life, or that it would surely expire at such a *particular* Term, it would

have a very unhappy Influence upon us. For, on the one hand, if it was at a *considerable* Distance, we should be in utmost Hazard of allowing our selves Liberty, to *live according to the Course of this World; fulfilling the desires of the Flesh & Mind.* And this we shou'd be apt to do, till we came within the near Prospect of our Dissolution: and then having so habituated ourselves to Sin as to be harden'd in it; it would be *almost* a Miracle, if we were ever prevail'd upon, to *break off our Sins by Righteousness, and our Iniquities by turning to GOD.* For as the Prophet argues, Jer. 13. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustom'd to do evil.* And on the other hand, if the Time of Life was *Short*, and to be terminated in the space of a few Years: tho' it might awaken our Consideration, & put us on Endeavours to make our Peace with GOD, and secure an Interest in Christ; yet how melancholy & uncomfortable, would it be like to make our Abode upon Earth? We should enjoy no Pleasure in the World: neither in Friends, nor Relatives; nor any of the good things, GOD has provided for our present Happiness. Such would be our Concern & Fear; such our dark and gloomy Apprehensions, as would not only unfit us to converse with one another; but even to live in such a World, as GOD has made this to be.

But now that the Time remains *Uncertain*, both these Inconveniences are avoided. Instead
of

of being encourag'd in a Course of Sin for the *present*, we have one of the strongest Arguments to engage us in an *immediate* Care, about the Business of Religion, and our Soul's Salvation; and at the same time, there is room left for the Exercise of *Hope*, which layes a Foundation for the Enjoyment of ourselves and the Comforts of Life.

We shou'd therefore thankfully acknowledge and admire the Wisdom & Goodness of G O D, in keeping us ignorant of the *Time & Circumstances* of our Death: the Knowledge of which, could not be of any real Service to us; but very hurtful upon many Accounts. We shou'd be content to be in the dark, as to these *Futurites*, and improve our Ignorance as a Motive to Zeal and Industry in *working out our own Salvation with Fear and Trembling*.

III. The *Metaphor* in the *Text*, signifies to us, the *inconstant, unsettled State of the present Life*. A *Vapour* is an *inconstant variable Meteor*. *One while* it extends it self far & wide, *anon* it dwindles away into Nothing. *Now* it appears thick & dense *presently* it becomes so thin & rarify'd as not to fall within Reach of Observation. Just such an *inconstant variable* thing is the *Life of Man*.

We seldom continue *long* in the same State; but are constantly passing under innumerable Changes. *This* Moment we are well and in Health; the *next* we are seiz'd with some fatal

Distemper. *Now* we abound in Riches and Plenty; *on a sudden* we are reduced to Poverty and Penury. In the *Morning* we are in Honour and Dignity; before *Night*, we wear the Character of Men of low Degree. To *Day* we are respected and well spoken of; by to *Morrow*, we are hated, despis'd and evil spoken against. This *Week* we are surrounded with Friends and Acquaintance; the *next* we have reason to make that Complaint, Psal. 88. 18. *Lover and Friend, thou hast put far from me, and mine Acquaintance into Darknes.* And so whatever our present State is, we quickly pass out of it into another; that is sometimes better, and sometimes worse.

And it is in a sort necessary, the *present State* of *Man's Life* should be thus *variable*. For so perverse & depraved are our Tempers, since our *Fall* from GOD, that it would be scarce possible for us, to carry it suitably, under *any one* invariable Condition of Life.

If, on the one hand, we were blest'd with a constant *Run* of Prosperity; for a long time together enjoying our Health & Friends, and all the Comforts and good things of Life: ten to one, but it would be the Means of our being ruined for ever. We could not bear such an *uninterrupted* Series of Worldly Happiness. We should be apt to grow proud & insolent; forgetful of GOD & our own Souls: & instead of being the more strongly engaged in His Love & Service, it would be likely we should *Kick* against Him;

Him ; contemn His Law, slight His Goodness, and by our *hard & impenitent Heart, treasure up to ourselves Wrath against the day of Wrath.* And on the other hand, if we were frown'd upon in Providence, and kept under poor, difficult and afflictive Circumstances ; and this was to be our Condition *invariably* ; it wou'd sink our Spirits, discourage our Endeavours, and unfit us for every thing. We shou'd have no Heart to engage in any Affair, neither respecting our Souls nor Bodies : or if we had, we shou'd not be able to pursue it, with Zeal and Resolution.

It is therefore a Wise disposal of Providence, that our *present* State is *variable*, that we are sometimes in one Condition & sometimes in another ; sometimes in Adversity & sometimes in Prosperity. Such a *mixt inconstant* State is best suited to the *present* Frame of our Minds ; and no doubt was design'd by GOD, as a *Kindness* to the World in general ; as being a *Means* wisely adapted, to serve the *End of Life*, which is the Glory of GOD, in such a Temper & Behaviour of ourselves, as He has made necessary, in order to our Future & Eternal well being.

IV. The *Metaphor* in the *Text* represents to us, the *Irrecoverableness of Man's Life*, when once gone. A *Vapour* when once vanish'd away, is *irrecoverably* gone. The same must be said of *Life* : When once expir'd, it can *never* be *recall'd*. The Extinction of Life is therefore described, Psal. 39. ult. *As a going hence, & being here*

here no more. And Job speaking of Man's Death, expresses himself in such Language as that, Job 14. 12. *Man lieth down, and riseth not till the Heavens be no more: they shall not awake, nor rise out of their Sleep.* And in the 14. v. *If a Man die, shall he live again?* The Question does not infer a Doubt, whether such as die, shall return back to live their Lives over again: But is the strongest Negation. *They shall not live again.* They shall never return back to any of the Employments or Enjoyments of the present Life. When Death hath once passed upon Men, their Probation season is over, and State made *Unalterable* for Eternity. Eccl. 1. 1. 3. --- *If the Tree fall towards the South, or towards the North: in the Place where the Tree falleth, there shall it be.* An awful Consideration! It should surely affect us to think, that as Death leaves us, so Judgment will find us; that as soon as ever this frail Life of our's is ended, our Condition from *that Moment* is for ever determined; our Place of Abode so fix'd, as that if we have misimprov'd the present season, we can never amend or correct our Mistake. O how shou'd our Attention be awaken'd at this! and our Hearts animated with Zeal & Resolution in doing the work, we were sent into the World upon! Beloved, seeing things are thus, *What manner of Persons ought we to be in all holy Conversation & Godliness?* With what Diligence should we labour, *that we may be found of our Judge, in Peace, without spot, and*

and blameless. Which brings me to our next general Head of Discourse, viz.

II. To show what *Influence*, the Representation, the *Text* gives of Life, *ought, in all Reason to have upon us.* And here that I might not *Exceed* the Limits of my *Hour*, I must confine my self to *only* a few general Hints. As,

1. It shou'd put us upon *Weaning our Affections from the World, and Moderating our Endeavours after it.* And are there any, whose Hearts are too much set upon the World, & that employ too much Pains in the Pursuit of it? It shou'd seem incredible, that *Men*, whom GOD has endow'd with Reason & Understanding, shou'd be so little govern'd, by a sense of their own Frailty, the exceeding Shortness & Uncertainty of the present Life. And yet alas! so it is. Yea, and the Generality of Persons are so strangely fond of the World as to think, they can never love it too well, nor endeavour too much after it. They will rise up early, and sit up late; go thro' Difficulties and Hardships; expose themselves to Hazards; run all Risques; submit to any thing, and do any thing, for the Obtaining *only* of a few Scraps or Portions of it. If we were to judge by the Temper & Behaviour of some Men, we must suppose they imagin'd, that both themselves and *their Houses would continue for ever, and their Dwelling-places to all Generations:* When alas! *Their Life, like a Vapour, appeareth but for a little Time, and*
then

then vanisheth away. How shou'd this Tho't beat down the Price of the World in our Esteem, and check our Endeavours after it? For if at the *longest* we must *quickly* leave the World; and may in a *Moment*, at any Time, be snatch'd away from all the Enjoyments of it: Why shou'd our Hearts be wedded to it, and our whole Time and Souls employ'd about it! Is it not far more reasonable to loosen our Affections from the Earth? to set light by the good things of it? and spend no more Pains in the Pursuit of them, than is really necessary for our present Comfort?

Perhaps we look upon the World, as our only Place of Happiness: and entertain in our Minds such exalted Apprehensions of the Value of outward Enjoyments, as to desire & aim at nothing higher. But O! let us remember, we shan't always have such Tho'ts of the World. We are hastening apace to the Grave. It won't be long, however far we may put from us the evil Day, before we shall find ourselves in the Agonies of Death. And when this comes to be our Case; what think we, will our Apprehensions about the World be? As we shall View it in a different Light, so will it certainly appear in quite different Colours. It will seem altogether Vanity. We shall see nothing desirable in it: but shall be amaz'd at our former Folly, in setting so high a Price on it, and making it the chief Object of our sollicitous Concern. And at such a Time as this: of what great Advantage will it be to us, if we have gain'd even as much of
this

this World, as we could possibly desire? Has our *highest* Ambition been gratified, in being honour'd and perferr'd among Men? — Our Honour must now be laid in the Dust; all our Marks of Distinction drop'd at the Mouth of the Grave: and when we appear in the other World, it will be upon a Level with the most ignoble Slave. — Or have we indulg'd our selves in Ease & Pleasure? taking all the carnal Delight we could wish for, or are capable of enjoying? — It is now all over and gone. And what remains, but cutting Reflections; restless Fears and Convulsions of Soul? — Or have we *heap'd up Riches*; *joyning House to House, and Field to Field*, till we are placed alone in the midst of the Earth? — Yet let us consider, That *Riches are not for ever*; * and that, “of all our Possessions, we shall now need no more than will but suffice to bury us. Silver & Gold are too heavy Laden, to be carried into another World. And what is it to a *dying* Man, whether his Chamber be richly furnish'd or not; whether he breath out his Soul in a Palace, or a Cottage.” †. In an Hour of Death, “We shall not take Pleasure in summing up our Estates, and counting how much we shall die worth, and how many Hundreds or Thousands we shall leave behind us.” Alas! the Concerns of *dying* Persons are usually of a quite different Nature. The Necessities of our Souls will now

* Prov. 27. 24. † Bp. Hopkins's Works Sermon 2 de

crowd themselves upon us. An accusing Conscience, and a fearful Expectation of approaching Torments, will shake out of our Minds all Tho'ts of the World, and fill us with the greatest Sollicitude to obtain the Favour of GOD, the Pardon of Sin, Peace of Conscience, and an Interest in the great SAVIOUR of Sinners. And of what Service will the World be to us, in these Respects? What Suitableness is there in it to supply these Wants of our Souls? "Food may satisfy Hunger, and Raiment fence off the Injuries of the Weather": There is a Suitableness in them to do so. But what will all worldly Enjoyments avail, towards appeasing GOD's Anger, or giving us a comfortable Hope of future Blessedness? What Suitableness is there in a Bag of Gold, or a sumptuous Building, to satisfy a Man's Mind, when perplex'd with Fears of Wrath & Hell? You may as well seek to cure a Wound in the Body, by applying a Plaister to the Garment, as seek to ease a wounded Spirit, by all the Treasures, Pleasures & Enjoyments of this World." * *Riches profit not in the Day of Wrath* ||. There is no Aptness in them to bring any true solace to the Soul. O let us not then suffer the World to engross our Affections, and take off our Tho'ts & Care from things of infinitely more Weight & Importance: But remembering, that we are *dying* Creatures, and that our Life, like a *Vapour*, will appear but

* Bp. Hopkins's Works. Sermon 1 st. || Prov. 11. 4.

for a little Time; let us make no other use of the World, nor put a higher Value upon it, than is reasonable for such kind of Creatures. The Apostle directs us, after what manner to use this World; with whose words, I shall finish this Head. *But this, I say Brethren, the Time is Short. It remaineth, that both they that have Wives, be as tho' they had none; and they that weep, as tho' they wept not; and they that rejoyce, as tho' they rejoyced not; and they that buy, as tho' they possess'd not; and they that use this World, as not abusing it: for the Fashion of this World passeth away,* 1 Cor. 7. 29---31.

2. The Account, we have had of *Life*, should reconcile our *Tho'ts* to whatever Condition, it shall please GOD to order out to us in the World; It is not a Matter of much Concernment, what our outward Circumstances are: provided, we make use of them, as a Means, to our better Preparation for Eternity. For whatever our Condition is, if we are contented with it, and make it our Care to glorify GOD under it, it will be no Hindrance to our future & everlasting well-being. And in order to this, we should Meditate upon the present Life, under the Representation, our *Text* gives of it. And the Influence of such Meditations, shou'd be to compose our Minds, and make us perfectly calm and resign'd to the Will Heaven.

Has it pleas'd GOD to allow us but a *small Portion* of this World's Goods. Why, a *little* shou'd content us for a *little while*: and tis but

for a *short Time*, we shall have our Abode here. Or are our Circumstances *strait & difficult*? Are we *hard* put to it, and *often suffering for want*? It cannot last *long*. Our Lives will *soon* come to their appointed Period. And this is a Consideration, that shou'd restrain Discontent; check all Misgivings of Heart, & silence our Murmurings. Or does GOD call us to undergo great *Tryals & Afflictions*? It shou'd make us easy, to think they shall *Shortly* have an End: when, if we have behav'd suitably under them, our Reward will be great, far beyond the Proportion of our sufferings. In a word, however *undesirable* our *present Circumstances* are, & what ever *Troubles & Inconveniences* we may meet with, we shou'd solace our selves with this, that if we *despise not these Chastenings of the Lord, nor faint when rebuked of him*: but are patient, humble and submissive; it won't be *long*, before we shall be deliver'd out of all our Difficulties, and translated to a World that is free from all kind of Evil; where we shall be compleatly happy, without Interruption for ever.

3. The Representation we have had of *Life*, should *make us good Husbands of our Time*, and put us upon improving it to the *wisest purposes*. For since, like a *Vapour*, it is so *exceeding short and uncertain*: we ought in all reason to *redeem our Time*, and improve the whole of it to the *best* Advantage; in mortifying our Lusts, restraining our Appetites, governing our Passions, rectifying our Tempers; and in a word,

accomplishing the great Work, for which our Life is designed. We should improve all Opportunities of doing and getting as much Good as we can; and should avoid all Occasions, either of doing Hurt to others, or receiving any our selves. We should always employ ourselves about something; and *something* that shall some how or other turn to a good Account. We should beware of squandering away our Time in Idleness; unprofitable Chat; too frequent Diversions & Visits: then which nothing more tends to wear off that serious Temper of Mind, that becomes such *dying* Creatures. In a Word, we should labour that our Life may be filled up with Work, and that it be *such*, both as to *Matter* and *Manner*, as shall subserve the Interest of our Souls and their eternal Salvation: and as that we may have Peace in our latter End. And indeed what more comfortable in an Hour of Death, than to be able to look back into a well spent Life; carefully employ'd to the Honour of GOD, the true Service of ourselves, and the Benefit of our fellow Creatures? As on the contrary, what more cutting and stinging, than to be forced to reflect upon a useless and unprofitable Life? spent to no purpose at all: or worse than none, in the Service of Sin and Satan? These Considerations, if there were no other, make it highly worth Men's while, to husband their Time well and so improve it to the best Advantage.

4. The Consideration of *Life as a Vapour, that appeareth but for a little Time, and then vanishes away, should put us upon frequent Examination into our State.* Serious *Self-examination* can never be an unsuitable Exercise for such *frail short liv'd* Creatures as we are. And we should be often calling ourselves to an Account ; looking into our Hearts and Lives, and inquiring what would become of us, if we should die within a few Days, and be called to give up our Account. Suppose our Case to be like *Hezekiah's*, who received such a Message as that from GOD, * *Thus saith the LORD, set thine House in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.* Or suppose GOD should say to us, as He did to the *rich Fool* in the Gospel, † *This Night, shall thy Soul be required of thee.* What Provision have we made for an amazing Eternity? Are we secure of the Friendship of GOD? Are we interested in the Merits of the *great REDEEMER*? Is our Account ready for our LORD and JUDGE? Or is GOD our Enemy, and CHRIST our Enemy? Are we wholly unprepared to die? and unmeet for an Appearance before the SON of MAN? These are very serious and solemn Inquiries. And whatever the loose and unthinking Part of the World, may imagine; they are very proper and seasonable Inquiries, for such to make, whose *Lives*, like a *Vapour*, are exceeding *short* and *uncertain*.

* *Isai.* 38. 1. † *Luk.* 12. 20.

And the Consideration that they are so, should put us upon frequent questioning with our selves, after some such manner as this : What if my Life should expire within a *few* Months, or Days? Yea, what if I should be seiz'd with Death, *this very* Day or Hour? Where would my poor Soul take up its everlasting Abode? in Heaven or in Hell? O let none of us rest satisfy'd, till we know, what our Condition is with respect to the eternal World, & how it would fare with us forever, if GOD should speedily & suddenly call us hence ! Can we with Ease lie down to Sleep, & not know but we may awake in everlasting Burnings! Surely we must be dreadfully stupify'd and harden'd, if we can live in Quiet, while Uncertain what our Eternal State is!---

5ly & finally, The Representation that has been given of *Life*, should put us upon particular and immediate Endeavours to prepare for the Time of its Expiration. And this is the best Improvement, we can make of it. And tis not a Matter of Indifferency, whether we will make this Use of it, yea or no: but of the *nearest* Concern; yea, of *absolute* Necessity. Our well being forever depends upon it. For the present is the only State, wherein we can make Provision for Eternity. And if we are negligent in an Affair of such infinite Importance, and leave it undone; we shall perish without any Remedy.

And the *sooner* we set about this great Work the *better* : because when we have in any good Measure

Measure accomplish'd it, we shall at once have freed ourselves, from that *Spirit of Bondage*, which otherwise we might, all our Days, have been *subject to*, by reason of *continual Fears of Death*. Besides, the *sooner* we begin upon this Work, the *more fit* we shall be to engage in it, the *better* dispos'd to it, and the *easier* we shall find it. But above all, the *utter Uncertainty of Life* discovers the Wisdom of a *speedy Preparation for Death*.

O let us not then Procrastinate in a Work of such infinite and everlasting Moment! but immediately set about it, and in GOD's Strength pursue it with the utmost Vigour & Resolution; giving ourselves no Rest, till we are in a fair way of going thro' with it.

But Perhaps we imagine *Death* to be *afar off*, and that tis Time eno'uh *hereafter* to think of *dying*, & in earnest to set about getting ready for it. Multitudes have tho't thus, and have acted under the Power of such a vain Imagination, to their eternal Undoing. GOD grant this may not be the Case of any of us! There is infinite *Danger* of it, while we put off the Tho'ts of Death. And yet alas! how apt are we all to do so! We can, but few of us, bear the Prospect of dying; and because we are inclin'd to live a great while; we *hope* we shall; and so live and act, as tho' we certainly *should*. What *Madness* is this! At what a dreadful *Hazard*, do we put our Soul's Salvation! Is it not altogether *Uncertain*, how *long* we shall live? Are we sure
of

of living *another* Day? Yea, can any particular Person say, that he shall go alive out of *this Assembly*? And shall we then run Ventures in a Case, where our everlasting well being is dependant! Is not this infinite & amazing Folly! Do we manage thus in the common Affairs of Life? Should we not be condemned for *Fools* and *Madmen* if we did? And shall we act after this manner, *only* in that Case, wherein if we are surpriz'd in our *Folly* by Death, it will be too late to repent of it for ever! Surely we an't appriz'd of the *desperate* Folly we bewray! If we were *duly* sensible of it, we could not be *easy* with ourselves; but should, being filled with Agony of Soul, immediately betake ourselves to GOD, & peirce even Heaven it self with ardent Cries for pardoning Mercy —.

Or it may be we think a few of our *latest* Days are enough, to be employ'd about the Work of preparing ourselves for another World: and that, if we have Time, upon a *Death-bed*, to cry to GOD for Mercy, it will be *Sufficient* for our Admission into Heaven.

To expose the Folly of this Pretence, I dare not say, as some have done, that a *Death-bed Repentance* is impossible; and that, if Persons ever obtain Salvation in such a Case, it must be thro' the *Uncovenanted* Mercy of GOD. Such an Opinion as this; as it seems contrary to the Tenure of the *Bible*, so it very much *lessens* the Riches and Glory of free Grace —.

There is no *truly* humble Penitent, but is a *qualify'd* Object of pardoning Mercy; and shall, according to the *Gospel Covenant*, certainly obtain it. And tho' a Person, who has been no ways concern'd about his Soul, till he comes to lie upon a Death-bed, is very *unfit* for the Work of Salvation, and has but *little* reason, *comparatively* speaking, to expect the *Aids* of Divine Grace: Yet, who can say, but GOD may dissolve such a Sinner into Grief & Shame; give him a *true* sight and sense of his Sins, and cause him to repent in Dust & Ashes: and so pluck him, as a Fire-brand out of the Fire.

This is what the most merciful GOD *may* do, if He should so please. Yea, and He has encouraged us to hope, this is what He *will* do; if we have not *out sinned* the Day of His Grace, and are not wanting to our selves. And no Sinner, tho' he may have rolled away his Days in Vanity, and is *now* just dropping into Eternity, has reason to despair of Divine Mercy. The Case of the *Penitent Thief* on the Cross, seems to have been recorded as an *Encouragement* to such Sinners --. And it must be *constantly affirmed*, that the Grace of GOD, is not confin'd to any particular *Age* or *Time* of Life. He may bestow his Grace, as upon *whomsoever*, so *whensoever* He pleases. And tis past doubt, many have experienced the *Loving-Kindness* of GOD in CHRIST, in some of their *last* Moments; and instead of *going away into Everlasting Punishment*, have *inherited Eternal Life*.

But

But let no Sinner encourage himself from the Mercy of GOD, to *continue* in his evil Courses, and *put off* the Business of Religion, till a *dying Hour*. What can be more base & disingenuous than this? To live in Sin all our Days, dishonouring and offending GOD, because He is so merciful and compassionate, as to accept *even* our *latest* Repentance, rather than we should perish forever; wherein could we discover a more vile ungenerous Temper of Mind! Surely this Goodness of GOD should work upon our Ingenuity, lead us to Repentance, & immediately engage us in the Divine Love & Service. This ought to be the Influence of such wonderful Grace & Mercy: Nor unless it is, shall we be able to free ourselves from the Charge of the greatest Baseness, the blackest Ingratitude.

Or if there was nothing of Disingenuity in such a Proceedure: Yet how infinitely unreasonable is it; "What strange Tho'ts must Men have of GOD & Heaven, & what extravagant Conceits of the *little* Evil of Sin, and the *great* Easiness of Repentance, that can impose upon themselves at this rate?" And how shall we be able to apply our selves to GOD *now*, when we have scarce ever had a serious Tho't of Him all our Lives? "Can we have the Face to bespeak Him in this manner? LORD, now the World
"and my Lusts have left me, and I feel my self
"ready to sink into eternal Perdition, I lay hold
"upon thy Mercy to deliver my Soul from going down into the Pit. I have heard strange

“ things of thy Goodness, and that thou art
 “ merciful even to a Miracle. This is that
 “ which I always trusted to, that after a long
 “ Life of Sin & Vanity thou wouldest at last be
 “ satisfy’d with a few penitent Words & Sighs at
 “ the Hour of Death. Let me not, I pray thee,
 “ be disappointed of this Hope, and put to Con-
 “ fusion. Is this an Address fit to be made to a
 “ wise Man, much less to the all-wise and just
 “ Judge of the World? and yet this seems to be
 “ the plain Interpretation of the late & forced
 “ Application of a great & habitual Sinner to
 “ *Almighty* GOD in his last Extremity, and
 “ when he is just giving up the Ghost & going
 “ to appear before his dreadful Tribunal *.

Besides, is a Time of Sicknefs and Death the
 most fit season, in which to make Preparation for
 Eternity, that we put it off till then? Certain-
 ly, if we have had Occasion to visit sick Chambers,
 and have taken a View of the Circumstances of
dying Persons, we can never imagine thus! they
 have now enough to grapple with their Illness.
 The whole strength of their Nature is laid out
 in sustaining the Infirmities of it. And they
 have little or no Heart to think of their Souls,
 or make Provision for their future Happiness.
 Or if they have, they are less fit for this now,
 than they ever were before. For either their
 Senses are stupify’d, their Tho’ts confused and
 shatter’d, their Frame discompos’d: Or else their

Pains are so extream, or their Bodies so very weak and faint, as to incapacitate them for the Work of getting ready to go out of the World. And O! how many, when upon a Death-bed, have, with Tears in their Eyes, most bitterly lamented their Folly, in deferring to make their Peace with GOD till then; they have *now* found so many Difficulties & Inconveniencies in the way, beyond what they would have done, if they had engaged in this Business sooner, and in a more proper Time of Life.

Furthermore, there is nothing more precarious than a *Death-bed* Preparation for another World. Sinners indeed, at such a time, are often in great Consternation of Mind; their Cries for Mercy serious & affecting, & their Vows & Promises particular and solemn. --- Yet, tis to be fear'd their *Concern* about their State most frequently arises, *only* from an awaken'd Sense of *what a fearful thing it is to fall into the Hands of the living GOD.* They can't bear to think of going away, *to dwell with devouring Fire, and to inhabit everlasting Burnings.* And because they are in Distress & Agony of Soul, they themselves, and perhaps their Friends too, are ready to hope for the best, and willing to believe that their Sorrows are the Sorrows of a *Repentance unto Life*: When alas! it may be, they are no ways troubled, that they have offended GOD and rejected CHRIST and acted all their Days unworthy of themselves, and below the Glory of their Natures; but are fill'd
with

with Horrour at the Prospect, of what is like to be the Consequence of their evil doings. Many while under Apprehensions of Death approaching, have been as much terrify'd and as heartily troubled; and have made as fair pretences & as solemn Promises: and yet, when GOD has ransom'd their Lives from Destruction, they have forgot the Anguish of Spirit they were in, and return'd to their former Folly & Wickedness: Yea, they have made themselves seven-fold more the Children of the Devil: whereby they have evidently discovered it to the World, that their Repentance was not sincere; and that if they had died, they would have perish'd forever. And no doubt, this is the Case of many, whose Lives were not spared to them. If they had been raised up again, their Repentance would have prov'd it self to have been, nothing more than the Terrours of a guilty Conscience. In a word, tis a Matter of the greatest Niceness and Difficulty, to determine concerning any *Death-bed* Repentance in *particular*, whether it be sincere and such as GOD will accept: And after all that can be said, it must & will remain very precarious and uncertain.

Moreover, when we come to lie upon a Sick bed, we shan't find the Business of getting ready for Death and Judgment such an easie thing, as at present we may imagine it to be. I doubt not, but most Sinners have slight Tho'ts of the Work of Repentance & Salvation. They suppose it is but confessing their Sins with external
signs

signs of Sorrow, and putting up a few Prayers to GOD for Mercy, *and so an Entrance shall be ministred unto them abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST*: and they imagine they can do this as well, just at the Point of Death, as at any Time, and so put it off till then. But O! what amazing Folly is this! and how dreadfully do we impose upon ourselves in a Matter of the highest Moment! Is the Work of Salvation such an easie one, and so dependant on our own Pleasure, that we may thus dally with it? Alas! if GOD ever give us a true Sight and Sense of things, we shall have quite different Tho'ts of it, and find that we were miserably mistaken. Heaven is not so easily obtained. 'Tis a great and difficult work to prepare ourselves for it, and we shall certainly find it to be so. And to convince us of this Truth, I tho't now to have gone on to tell you, what is included in that Preparation for Death, that I have been thus long urging upon you. But I see the Time will allow me only to observe in General,

That there is a two fold Preparation for Death, the one *habitual*, the other *actual*. The Ingredients that constitute the *former*, are true Faith in CHRIST, an inward rooted Aversion to all Sin, & a prevailing Disposition to universal Holiness: in order to which, generally Speaking, it is necessary, that we take a great deal of Pains in the use of Prayer, Meditation, reading
and

& hearing GOD's Word, &c. which are the ways, in which He ordinarily *makes known the exceeding Greatness of his Power*, in putting Persons into a State of Salvation. But besides this, there is an *actual* Preparation; which, tho' not of absolute Necessity, yet is highly requisite, as tending to a peaceful & comfortable Death. And the best way in order to our obtaining this, is to familiarize to ourselves the Tho'ts of Death; to keep a constant sense of our own Frailty upon our Minds; to mortify our Affections to the World, and place them upon those things that are above: and in a word, to look upon every Day of our Lives, as not Knowing but it may be our Last; and to live & act every Day, as tho' we were certain, before the next, our eternal State would be determin'd.

I have now done with my Text: and shall only add a few Words on the mournful Occasion of my discoursing to you upon such a Subject at this Time, *viz.* the Lamented Death of that Honourable and vertuous Gentlewoman, Mrs. *SARAH BYFIELD*, whom, last Week, we follow'd to the Grave.

For her Character, I think my self, in Justice to her Memory, oblig'd to say, --- That as she was honoured by her Birth; being *Daughter* to a *renowned FATHER* * of this Country, who, for several Years, with *universal* Love and

* Gov. LEVERETT,

Reverence,

Reverence, sat in the FIRST CHAIR of Government over it; so that her Temper & Conduct were every way worthy of such a *distinguished* Parentage.

She had *naturally* a weak & tender Body; but a strong & noble Soul: which, being cultivated & enrich'd by a good Education and great Industry, render'd her truly amiable & desirable; and fitted her to be a Blessing in the Station Providence had assign'd her.

Her Temper was lively & chearful; yet far from light & vain: being well *ballast* by a *singular* Discretion. In her most pleasant Hours, She was never unfit to enter upon a Serious Subject, and always treated it with a becoming Gravity and Reverence.

She had a good Taste in Conversation, and was excellently well turn'd for it: having a ready Wit; a sprightly Genius; an easy smooth way of expressing herself; and being able, without Stiffness or Ostentation, to be both entertaining and profitable.

She was a *Person* of great Sincerity & Plainheartedness; meek & humble; patient & resign'd: which she had frequent Opportunities of discovering, by reason of those many Indispositions, that were inseparable from so *brittle* a Constitution.

In a Word, She was an *Honour* to her Sex, in her exemplary Deportment under all the various Characters & Relations of Life: As a Neighbour, Kind & Pitiful: As a Friend, true & hearty;

without Disguise & abhorrent to Flattery and Deceit: As a Wife, tender & dutiful; engaging in her Carriage; reverent & respectful: As Mistress in a Family, discreet in her Management; a Lover of good Order; neat & cleanly; tho'tful of all under her Care; indulgent & compassionate to her Servants: especially concern'd about their Souls, and frequent in teaching them the good Knowledge of the LORD; in her Treatment of Strangers, hospitable; courteous, pleasant, obliging & edifying to those that came to visit her.

But her *chief* Excellency, & what *most* recommended to all that knew her, was her *undissembled* Piety. She had an habitual prevailing Awe and Reverence of GOD upon her Heart: which *early* discovered it self, and *all along* thro' the Course of her Life, not only in an utter Abhorrence of every thing that favour'd of Prophaness & Irreverence; but in a due Treatment of those things, wherein the *Divine Honour* is nearly concern'd. She lov'd the House, & Sanctify'd the Day of God; gave her constant devout Attendance on the Publick Worship, and *all* Gospel Ordinances; paid a singular Regard to the *Holy Scriptures*; valued the Ministers of Religion; and had an universal Regard to all good Men. But above all, CHRIST was the *Object* of her Love, her Faith, her Hope. It was in her Account *a faithful saying*, and she esteem'd it *worthy of all Acceptation*, that CHRIST JESUS *was come into the World to save Sinners*. HIM therefore she embrac'd as the *alone* REDEEMER of Souls; HIM she trusted

trusted with the great Affair of her Eternal Salvation ; HIM she lov'd with her whole Heart ; HIM she made it her Care to please in all things ; HIS Image she was Adorn'd with ; & the Graces of HIS SPIRIT she liv'd in the daily Exercise of : And we charitably believe she is gone to be with CHRIST, which is best of all.

I doubt not, but the Mourning Friends & Relatives have often refresh'd their Souls, by looking back to her past Conversation in CHRIST ; and then by turning their View forward to those unutterable Glories, she is now possess'd of, in the Place GOD has ordain'd for the *Spirits* of Believers, in their *separate State*. And while by *Faith*, they are beholding her, as in the Bosome of JESUS, I may well suppose, they grieve not for *her* ; but rather rejoyce, that she is got beyond the Reach of Sorrow, the Power of Temptation and the Possibility of Sinning ; and that she is entred upon the Reward of Righteousness, which is *Joy & Peace, Quietness & Assurance for ever* : Yet upon their *own* Accounts, they may have Reason to Mourn, and stand in need of Consolation.

We heartily wish, for all the Relatives, Divine Support under this *Trial of their Faith* ; the comforting Presence of the *Holy GHOST* ; and the sanctifying Influences of supernatural Grace, whereby they may be enabled so to behave themselves, as that GOD may be honour'd, their own Holiness increased, and their future & *eternal Weight of Glory* enhanced.

And particularly, we would sympathize with that Aged & Honourable Servant of G O D, who was most nearly related to the Person deceased. You little tho't to appear in mourning for one, you expected and desir'd shou'd follow you to the Grave. Yet so the Sovereign GOD has order'd it! He has taken from you the pleasant Companion of your Age, who might have been the Helper of it's Grievs, and render'd it far more easie and desirable to you! But be dumb with Silence; --- meekly bear this *Chastening of the LORD*; --- take a realizing View of it, as coming from your Covenant GOD, and FATHER, *who never afflicts willingly, nor grieves his Children*: --- Adore the Sovereignty, the Wisdom, the Righteousness and Holiness of this Providence. --- Let it be your chief Care so to carry your self under it, as to give a bright Example of *Subjection to the Father of Spirits*; of Humility, Patience, Resignation ----- And may it serve to make you a *Partaker of the Divine Nature* in still greater Measures, and so advance you yet further in your Preparedness for that Eternal happy State, you hope and long for, and are arriv'd at the Confines of! --- We heartily pray GOD to be the Staff of your Age, your Joy and Comfort thro' the remaining part of your Life; your Guide thro' Death, and *when your Flesh and Heart faileth, the Strength of your Heart and your G O D forever.*

To

To Conclude : The Death even of Women of so distinguish'd a Character is a publick Loss: and we shou'd resent it as such ; --- and be importunate in our Cries to the GOD of all Grace, that as He removes them away by Death, so that He would raise up others of the same excellent Spirit to supply their Place, and make good their Ground ----- We should *all* lay the Deaths of such Persons to Heart. -- Particularly *our Women* shou'd do so, and labour to imitate them in those things that were vertuous and praise-worthy. And it is to be wish'd for all our Women, that they may *be well reported of for good Works* * being *in Behaviour as becometh Godliness* ; not *false Accusers* ; not *given to much Wine* : *Teachers of good things* ; *Sober, Lovers of their Husbands* ; *Lovers of their Children* ; *discreet* ; *chast* ; *Keepers at Home* ; *good* ; *obedient to their own Husbands*, that the Word of GOD be not blasphemed. † In like manner also, that they adorn themselves in *modest Apparel*, with *shame-facedness* & *Sobriety* ; --- and (*which becometh Women professing Godliness*) with *good Works*. ||

* 1. Tim. 5. 10. † Titus 2. 3, -- 6. || 1. Tim. 2. 9, 10.

A M E N.

An APPENDIX.

From the *Weekly News-Letter*, No. 1405.

Containing an Account of the Deceased.

B O S T O N, December 29. 1730.

Y Esterday were Buried here the Remains of that truly honourable & devout Gentlewoman, Mrs. SARAH BYFIELD, amidst the affectionate Respects and Lamentations of a numerous Concourse.----- Before carrying out the Corpse a Funeral Prayer was made, by One of the Pastors of the *Old Church*, to whose Communion she belonged: Which, tho' a Custom in the Country-Towns, is a singular Instance in this place, but it's wish'd may prove a leading Example to the general Practice of so christian & decent a Custom.----- The Pall was held up by the honourable the late Lieut. Gov. DUMMER, with other Gentlemen of His Majesty's Council. Among the mourning Relatives went his Excellency Governour BELCHER, and his Honour Lieut. Gov. TAILER: follow'd by a long Train of Persons of publick Distinction and private Character; paying their last Offices to the Dead, and uniting their sincere Condolences with the Living.

This Gentlewoman was distinguish'd by her Birth and Family; being youngest Daughter to the late excellent Gov. LEVERETT, whose Name is still had in Honour among us, and will be always venerable to those that know the Story of *New-England*.----- She was honourable also
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by her Marriage ; being Consort to the worthy aged *Nathanael Byfield*, Esq; sometimes Senior Counsellor for this Province, and now Judge of the Vice-Admiralty ; to whom she was marry'd *April 17. 1718.* The Companion of his advanced Years, the dear Partner of his Griefs and Joys, and very much his Delight and Ornament.

But She was most of all distinguish'd by her personal Merits ; which those have a singular Sense of, that were most intimately acquainted with her : and this is one of the surest Tests of true Worth. She inherited much of the excellent Spirit & Principles, which embalm the Memory of her incomparable Father & Mother, who were some of the fairest Ornaments of their Age. She had a conspicuous Share of that good Sense, so natural to the Family, and was much improv'd in the most useful Knowledge. In Conjunction with a sprightly Wit, She had a thoughtful Genius ; and her fervent Temper was govern'd & adorn'd by a rare Discretion : which peculiarly accomplish'd her to shine in that superiour Rank where Divine Providence placed her. She honoured the several States of Virginity and Marriage ; and fill'd up the various Characters and Relations she sustain'd, with the Duties belonging to them. While she affected not Appearances, but declined Show and Noise, a primitive Simplicity, Humility & Modesty reflected a Lustre on all her other Graces & Accomplishments : and she shone with Eminence in the several Virtues of the Domestick Life, the proper Distinctions of her Sex. And here the Prudence of her Oeconomy, joyn'd with a hospitable Management, her Civility & Courteousness to Visitants, her grave & chearful Conversation, her reverent & engaging Carriage to her honourable Consort, and wise Deportment among his Children ; these things have merited for her the Privilege & Honour of *Solomon's* vertuous Woman : *Her Children arise up and call her Blessed ; her Husband also, and he praiseth her.*

But above all her Memory is respected for that serious Piety, and Spirit of Devotion, which brighten'd her early Years, and continued with her to the End. She was favoured with a religious as well as ingenuous Education ;
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and agreeably (in Addition to the Gentlewoman) she had much of *the Christian*, which is a Distinction that will last, when all others are bury'd in Silence. She was a lover of sacred Retirements; liv'd upon her Bible, and gave her self to Prayer. An equal Friend she was to Family-Devotions: and the publick Assemblies cou'd witness her diligent Attendance on all publick Ordinances. She was a strict Observer of the LORD'S DAY, and took Care to sanctify the Sabbath in her Conduct at home, as well as at the House of GOD. She took a great deal of commendable Pains in Catechising & instructing the Servants committed to her Charge: Opening her Mouth with Wisdom, and in her Tongue was the Law of Kindness. In her you might see the condescending & faithful Mistress, the affectionate Mother, the vertuous & prudent Wife, the constant Friend, and the obliging Neighbour. And surely the World will not envy these just Honours to the Memory of so valuable a Person.

She was born *July 13. 1673.* --- and died after a short Illness, *Dec. 21. 1730.* Leaving behind her that good Name, *which is better than precious Ointment, and the day of Death was better to her (we trust) than the day of her Birth.* --- May we all be found Followers of them who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promises!

